## Four Far Apart

TO the volumes of the Modern Library, which near the hundred mark, has just been added Gertrude Atherton's *Rezanov*, happily bound in an unobtrusive blue, and by so much restfully different from the reds and greens Mr. Liveright has been giving us lately. *Rezanov* is a really good story, and the affair of the impressive Russian who came to California in the old Spanish days, there meeting Concha of the Castilian roses, is one that either Joseph Conrad or Joseph Hergesheimer would have been delighted to handle. Mrs. Atherton does it differently from either. William Marion Reedy has written an introduction to the story in which he rhapsodizes, pardonably enough, but in which he very wickedly gives away altogether too much of the story. Well, it is likely we all do that sometimes.

*Opportunities in the Newspaper Business*, by James Melvin Lee, is one of a series of small books pointing out opportunities everywhere which Harper & Brothers are bringing out. Mr. Lee wrote a history of American journalism and a book prescribing ethics for newspaper men; and he is, furthermore, director of the department of journalism in New York University. This is a first rate little volume if only because of its intense readability. In a general way it discusses the country weekly and the smal city and metropolitan dailies, with plenty of anecdotes. We think it a little too sunny; but perhaps that is why any one who has to do with newspaper work should read it.

The public services of Julius Henry Cohen to the garment industry in New York city and his knowledge of labor affairs insure attention for his latest small volume called *An American Labor Policy*. It is what most books of its kind are not, interesting to the ordinary reader without special knowledge of the subject. It darts about in all directions and quotes wildly from everybody, winding up with an effort to find a common ground for labor and capital. The common ground it finds is not new and will satisfy labor not at all. Mr. Cohen wants agreements voluntarily made by employers and workers to be sanctified as part of the law of the land; he would have a labor contract so strong that, once the worker had acquieseed in it, those who broke it would be dealt with as enemies of society. Imagine, if you please, the traps that would be set—and successfully too. But his book is worth an hour's attention, for all that.

When you pick up a pleasant sized volume with the attractive title *A Book About the English Bible* you think to yourself: "Well, here at last is something that the average man can read and get understanding from; shouldn't wonder if he got some regular enjoyment too." Alas, no. This is just another one of those books in which scholarship has darkened counsel. Too much erudition. Prof. Gardiner's *The Bible as English Literature* remains the only book of its kind that we ever got anything out of. And having read Gardiner and having had our appetite whetted it makes us angry to come upon a book for the enjoyment of which several years in a theological seminary is necessary. We have not the time, and so pass on in mournful silence.

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REZANOV. By Gertrude Atherton. Boni & Liveright.

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE NEWSPAPER BUSINESS. By James Melvin Lee. Harper & Bros.

AN AMERICAN LABOR POLICY. By Julius Henry Cohen. Macmillan Company.

A BOOK ABOUT THE ENGLISH BIBLE. By Josiah H. Penniman. Macmillan Company.



Portrait of a movie magnate, Rex Beach.

## "The Spell of Alsace"

READ a real romance in the guise of history, *The Spell of Alsace*, by André Hallays, translated from the French by Frank Roy Fraprie. It is one of the "Spell Series," issued by the Page Company, of Boston.

There are beautiful illustrations in color of feudal castles, Rhine ruins, queer streets in old towns, and portraits of some famous men and women who have lived in Alsace. M. Hallays is a painter and a humanist, a man who spots the anecdote wherever he goes, who sees stories in stones and epics in the valleys of the Vosges. There are dozens of towns described, and each one stands out starkly or glowingly under the pen of the author.

The beauty of M. Hallays's book is that the history of Alsace is put into the introduction. He has a poor opinion of mere data and chronology. Alsace has been the old pigskin in the greatest international football game ever staged. Since Julius Cæsar started it, some years before Charlemagne, this beautiful, dream evoking province has had a history that makes the history of Ireland look like a preface to a peace pamphlet. She is still going strong, like the late lamented Johnnie Walker of billboard fame. And be it remembered she aged in the wood of German Kultur for nearly half a century. But she is securely in the mitt of France this time, mainly because of that touchdown that Papa made at the Marne.

The two most fascinating parts of this book concern the famous M. de Voltaire and Alfieri, the passionate revolutionary, amorous Italian poet, who hated France all his life because it rained for two weeks when he first visited Paris. Voltaire fled to Colmar in 1753 after his unpleasantness with his patron, Frederick of Germany. At that time the old man was in bad all around. Fred had bounced him after confiscating everything of the Frenchman's that he could lay his hands on, Paris would have nothing to do with him. So he settled down in the Rue de Juifs, in Colmar, with a family by the name of Goll. The house still stands; there is no memorial tablet on its walls, but instead an advertisement for a tooth paste.

He had a mortgage on the vineyards of Riquewihr, so his eats were safe for a time. M. Hallays tells us that his three enemies, the gout, literary pirates and the Jesuits, pursued him even into Alsace; the latter, in fact, pestered him so much that the old rascal sent for a Capuchin monk and received the sacrament in one of Colmar's churches. Collini, one of his travelling Boswells, has described this extraordinary scene. You must read it to believe it.

That's only one of the many famous things that happened in Alsace when the latter was not bucking the Teuton ten yard line. Along about 1784 Alfieri, the d'Annunzio of his time, flings himself on the scene. The town is Wettolsheim, in the castle of Martinsbourg; and here M. Hallays relates to us in many pages something that is still town talk there—the romance of the poet and his adorata donna, Aloisia de Stolberg, Countess of Albany. Sainte-Beuve has told us a great deal about this unhappy and brilliant woman whose beauty has remained a legend in Wettolsheim. She inspired many of Alfieri's plays. The portrait of the Countess in this volume shows to us a woman that Leonardo da Vinci should have painted to place beside his Mona Lisa.

The Chateaux of the Cardinals de Rohan are described with the rather unevangelical lives and habits of these liberal Princes of the Church. One of them was called by Madame de Sevigné "that beautiful abbé, so beautiful and too beautiful." Saint-Simon said "he had the face of a Cupid." This was Armand Gaston de Rohan-Soubise. It was he who employed Robert Le Lorrain to execute over the door of his stables in high relief The Horses of the Sun.

No side of Alsatian life is neglected in this book. A chapter is given to M. Maurice Barrès and his book on Alsace, *In the Service of Germany*. There is also a chapter on eighteenth century art in Alsace; one on public festivals; and the concluding chapter is *Unchanging Alsace*, in which the French heart of the country is dug from under the Germanic face and helmet.

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THE SPELL OF ALSACE. By André Hallays. Boston: Page Company.

## "The Street of Adventure"

IF Philip Gibbs had not excited the admiration of America to so great an extent by his work as a war correspondent it is improbable that *The Street of Adventure*, his ten-year-old novel, would be enjoying a revival. As a novel it does not justify the exhumation, but as a novel by Philip Gibbs it does. Persons who know him as a correspondent only will embrace the opportunity of making his acquaintance as a novelist. The story is of life in a London newspaper office and is the best selection that could have been made from Mr. Gibbs's work for reprinting, as his claim upon our public is journalistic, and thus the connection is established.

As a picture of newspaper life the book does rather well, though it will undeniably appeal more acutely to those who are ignorant of the ways of reporters in their lairs than to those priviliged to know them at close range, and it is conceivable that even the pepole who read for information will find Mr. Gibbs taking their ignorance too much for granted, his manner too consciously informative. The Philip Gibbs of ten years ago was apt to become boring in the endeavor to lay his world before us in much the manner of returned inmates of boarding schools who regale us with their highly colored scrapes. If he had written *The Street of Adventure* this year it is safe to believe that he would have shown a complete lack of the self-consciousness and false judgment which mar the book. That he would have left himself or at least his name out of the story is equally certain. Does it smack of bad taste to have an author give his hero a letter of introduction in his own name, or are we wrong?

The preface to Mr. Gibbs's novel, which should, like most prefaces, be read before and after the story, confirms our belief that the newspaper of which he writes actually existed. "It is no secret now," he writes, "that the newspaper was the *Tribune*, which lived and died before the war, as one of the most unhappy adventures in Fleet street. Many of the characters have been recognized as real people and have forgiven me for my portraits of themselves, not unkindly in intention even when touched with caricature."

It is no easy task to create a hero for a novel in which he is so obviously to play a minor part, and the fact that it has been accomplished here with only an occasional leakage of sawdust impels us to the belief that Frank Luttrel is one of the characters taken from life. Even so, he is remarkable, as the livest people are apt to die on their way into fiction. Luttrel's adventures in Fleet street are put forth in detail and as many other people's in less detail as can be crowded into 400 pages. Luttrell was from the country, that fount of English heroes, the son of a rector, highly strung and graduated from Oxford. "He was unfortunate in being a gentleman and something of a scholar," Mr. Gibbs remarks in launching him upon his journalistic career. The Luttrel type is selected as least adaptable and most susceptible to the sort of spell that a newspaper weaves about its victims.

There is, of course, a love story, strictly journalistic, and so good that six years after the publication of the book soldiers fresh from the trenches remonstrated with Mr. Gibbs behind the lines as to the manner of its ending. This we learn from the preface, which astonishes us. An author should not deliberately give his story away before it is begun. We are not in accord with the soldiers, however, and find entire satisfaction with the development of the plot.

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THE STREET OF ADVENTURE. By Philip Gibbs. E. P. Dutton & Co.

THE best thing any one can do, who wants to write or who does write but unsatisfactorily, is to read William McFee's little sketch called *The Idea*, in the August *Bookman*.